



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
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APRIL 28, 2004

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SECOND ARIZONA MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO COCAINE POSSESSION, FIREARM VIOLATION

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that an Arizona man pleaded guilty in federal court today to possessing cocaine with the intent to distribute and illegally possessing a firearm.

Lance C. Tomlinson, 29, of Indianola, Ariz., pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Scott O. Wright this morning to possession with intent to distribute cocaine and illegally possessing a firearm.

By pleading guilty, **Tomlinson** admitted that he was in possession with intent to distribute 500 grams or more of cocaine on Dec. 14, 2002, in Columbia, Mo. **Tomlinson** also admitted that he was in possession of a firearm during and in relation to a drug trafficking crime on Dec. 14, 2002. **Tomlinson** admitted that he illegally possessed a Springfield Armory .40 caliber semi-automatic pistol when he also possessed with intent to distribute the cocaine. Finally, **Tomlinson** pleaded guilty to a forfeiture count of the original indictment, which will require him to forfeit any proceeds derived as a result of the narcotics violation, including a 2001 Ford F-150 pickup truck and approximately \$18,000.

Tomlinson is the second co-defendant to plead guilty in this case.

On Jan. 27, 2004, **Jon D. Athenour**, 29, of Phoenix, Ariz., also pleaded guilty to possession with intent to distribute at least 500 grams of cocaine in Columbia on Dec. 14, 2002.

Athenour was driving the Ford F150 when he was stopped for speeding on Dec. 14, 2002, Graves said. **Tomlinson** was a passenger in the vehicle at the time of the traffic stop. Law enforcement officers found a briefcase with packages containing approximately 2.2 kilograms of cocaine in the car, as well as several small marijuana roaches in the ashtray, and a loaded Springfield .40 caliber semi-automatic pistol under the armrest between the two front seats.

By pleading guilty, Graves said, **Athenour** also admitted that he knew the cocaine was in the truck and that he was being paid \$4,000 to drive it to Indianapolis, Ind.

The co-defendants were originally charged in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury on Feb. 7, 2003, in Jefferson City.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Anthony P. Gonzalez. It was investigated by the Missouri State Highway Patrol, the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow